



Research Article

Prospecting the Roles and Changing Aspects of Indigenous Knowledge as Social Capital in Conflict Resolutions of South Wollo Zone: The Case of Tehuledere Woreda

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Abstract

The main objective of this research is to prospect the roles and changing aspects of indigenous knowledge as social capital in conflict resolutions of south wollo zone: the case of tehuledere woreda. The research design and approach of this study is a cross sectional design with a mixed research approach, where Survey, and in-depth interview were the primary sources of required data. The quantitative data was collected from 189 household respondents in the selected three kebele districts, namely: Keti, Weldelulo, and Gobeya by using semi structured survey questionnaire. On the other hand, the qualitative data was collected from in-depth interviews with seven local elders, religious leaders and influential community members, continuing until data is saturated. The findings of this research indicated that land disputes emerged as the predominant source of conflict (51.9%), followed by property related disputes (24.3%) and family related issues (23.8%). The study emphasizes the significant reliance on respected elders and religious leaders in conflict mediation, emphasizing practices such as Shimgilina as central to community cohesion. However, the research also reveals a trend among younger generations towards formal legal systems, posing challenges for the preservation of traditional conflict resolution methods. The research highlights the urgent need for documenting and codifying indigenous knowledge, which is essential for enhancing its relevance and effectiveness in contemporary conflict management. Thereby contributing to socio-economic development South Wollo Zone, Tehuledere wereda.

Keywords

Indigenous Knowledge, Social Capital, Conflict Resolution, Socio-economic Development

1. Introduction

According to Warren, D., indigenous knowledge as social capital of the poor is the knowledge used by local people to make a living in a particular environment [24]. It is defined by Johnson, M. as a body of knowledge built up by a group of people through generations of living in close contact with local environment [15]. In Ethiopia, where different ethnic

groups are living together, various conflict resolution mechanisms are developed and practiced as there is wide range of potential differences among different people. For Kebede, L., Aregash, E., and Lensa, T., an absence of conflict implies the lack of meaningful social interactions between people [16]. In Amhara region, various conflict resolution mechanisms are

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Received: 12 February 2026; Accepted: 24 February 2026; Published: 9 March 2026



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widely practised by the local people; shimgilina, yezamedagninet, gilgil and iriq are among the common ones with the purpose of insuring people's social relationship for collective actions. Regardless of the causes of conflict, by its very nature, conflict results in short and long term disputes that affect the social and economic wellbeing of the society.

The Amhara people have developed an age-old system of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. These indigenous conflict resolution mechanism plays and have so many advantages not only for the local people but also for the governments. However, the concerned government have gave less attention to it. Mussa, M., Teka, H., and Aliye, A., pointed out that the role played by elders and clan leaders in conflict resolution have been overlooked by concerned governments [20]. Indigenous knowledge is the back bone for societies socio-economic development. A society who lost his indigenous knowledge was culturally impoverished and gradually become dependent on others society culture.

For Ajanaw, A., in his study conducted on the role of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms for maintaining social solidarity and strengthening of communities in Alefa district [6], North West of Ethiopia, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms manage almost all kinds of conflicts ranging from petty offences, civil cases such as financial, family and contractual conflicts to murder and blood dispute cases. In his study area, conflict resolution is mainly carried out by male elders and leaders of the community. Females only participate in providing suggestions about the conflict resolution process and have no direct role.

Indigenous conflict resolution mechanism is essential for maintaining social relationships and ensuring social solidarities of the societies. As the causes of conflict vary, it becomes every day challenges. For Bamlake, Y., the major causes of conflict in Simada woreda of the Amhara region are associated with access to land as it is directly related with high demand for land, poor border demarcation and discrepancy during inheritance of land [8]. Furthermore, divorce and problems related with marriage are also main sources of conflict. His finding showed that Shimgilina is the commonly practiced method of indigenous conflict resolution which many people used to settle their conflict.

In Bamlake, Y. study area, Simada woreda of the Amhara region, residents employ various types of indigenous conflict resolution mechanism. Indigenous conflict resolution mechanism is preferable as compared to formal justice system. Among the reasons why local people prefer indigenous conflict resolutions are the cost and time needed to resolve the problem, the simple procedures it needed, and the absence of excessive bureaucracy it requires as compared to the formal conflict resolution system [8].

Bamlake, Y., studied traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Keffa societies of Ethiopia [10]. He selected elders, religious leaders and well figured peoples of the society using purposive sampling techniques. His finding showed that marital cases, alcoholism, kinship and religious based conflicts are

the major types and causes of conflicts in his study area. Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are effective while practiced by elderly people. Furthermore, his finding showed that younger people tend to distressed with such traditional conflict resolution mechanism due to modernity and religious purposes.

There are a number of studies on indigenous conflict resolution mechanism in Ethiopia in general and in Amhara region in particular. However, the majority of the study gives much emphasis on the advantage of indigenous conflict resolution mechanism rather the challenges faced as it is passed from generation to generation by words of mouth and is not formally documented, preserved rather than backed by legal policy frameworks.

Although the people of the Amhara Region engaged in agricultural economic activity as the dominant culture area, the different zones have significant degree of differences in geography, social and communal system conflict resolution mechanisms. Thus, the researches of this study didn't find well organized studies on the roles and changing aspects of indigenous knowledge as social capital in conflict management Te-huledere zuria worda of South wollo Zone. Therefore, this study was focus on the roles and changing aspects of indigenous knowledge as social capital in conflict resolutions of South wollo Zone of the Amhara Region.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Indigenous knowledge (IK) is defined differently in different literature. Indigenous knowledge refers to the local, unique knowledge possessed by a given culture or society. Indigenous knowledge is unique from the conventional knowledge system which is generated by formal institutions like higher institutions and research centers. Such knowledge, however, changes and modifies within local communities reflecting their specific environment and physical resource base. Indigenous knowledge serves as a cornerstone for governance in various domains including agriculture, health care, food preparation, education and natural resource management particularly at rural levels. Indigenous knowledge (IK) is holistic, place-based system that is consensually-developed and long maintained by indigenous communities. For Berkes, F., is typically orally transmitted, carried out and closely related with the local environment [9]. According to the World Bank, indigenous knowledge refers to a large body of knowledge and skills which is developed outside the formal system including development planning, environmental assessment, resource management, local conservation of biological resources, and conflict resolution [26].

2.2. Social Capital

Social capital refers to the networks, norms, and trust that

enable cooperation and collective action within a community [12]. It is a network of relationships which provide, for those within it, access to embedded resources and/or support [5]. Social capital is the resource that people cultivate in their social relationships, and hence makes one's daily life easier and more applicable [21]. Situations of local communities Social capital of local communities is closely associated with the maintenance of kinship ties, traditional social structures and community-based institutions [4].

2.3. Conflict

Conflict has always been part of human life. It's everywhere you look, showing up in big and small ways throughout history. According to Wehrmann, B., conflicts in local communities don't just pop up out of nowhere they're complicated. They often come from a long history of people feeling left out, fighting over resources, or just clashing over culture [25]. NURC puts it simply: conflict means people, groups, or even whole regions or countries can't see eye to eye, usually because their interests or perspectives just don't line up [22].

3. Research Methods

3.1. Research Approach and Design

This study used a mixed method approach (quantitative and qualitative) to prospect roles and changing aspects of indigenous knowledge as social capital in conflict resolutions of south wollo zone: the case of tehuledere woreda. The study follows a concurrent triangulation strategy in which the researcher was collected both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and then triangulate the two databases for convergences and differences. The mixing of data from the two approaches was made in the discussion section of the study [13].

3.2. Study Area

Tehuledere Wereda is located in South Wollo, part of the Amhara region in Ethiopia. It lies 430 km from Addis Ababa along the main road to Bahir Dar. The wereda is bordered to the south by Dessie Zuria, to the southwest by Kutaber, to the northwest and north by the Mille River, to the northeast by Were Babu, and to the southeast by Kalu. According to the [14], Tehuledere has a population of 117,877, representing a 1.14% decline since the 1994 census. This population includes 59,300 men and 57,777 women, with 14,745 (12.51%) residing in urban areas and 103,132 (87.49%) in rural areas.

3.3. Study Population, and Sampling

3.3.1. Target Population

Primary participant: all Households in Tehuledere wereda who are included in the selected kebeles. Tehuledere woreda

has 19 rural kebeles and 5 urban kebeles. The researcher selected three rural kebele's, namely Ketie (05), Weldelulo (04) and Gobeya (012) using purposive sampling techniques. These three rural kebeles have a total households of 1660, 1400, and 1550 respectively (Source: from respective local kebele administrations). The unit of analysis for this study was at household level.

3.3.2. Sampling Techniques

The sample size was decided using CSA sample size determination formula, where $N=4610$ households in the selected kebeles [17].

The sample size of the study is determined based on Kothari's formula as follow (Kothari, 2004):

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq N}{e^2 (N - 1) + Z^2 pq}$$

Where,

N = Population size

P = Sample proportion on success

n =Sample size

$q=1-p$

z = the value of the standard variety at a given confidence

e =level of acceptable error (the precision)

Thus, $N=4610$, $p=0.02$, $z=2.005$, & $e=0.02$

$$\Rightarrow n = \frac{(2.005)^2 0.02 (1-0.02) 4610}{(0.02)^2 (4610-1) + (2.005)^2 0.02 (1-0.02)} = 189$$

In this study, three kebeles were identified using purposive sampling technique, the reason behind is that these kebeles are potential areas of indigenous knowledge and conflict resolutions and helps the researcher in order to answer the research questions. To select sample households, the list of households was obtained from the three kebele offices and the list served as sampling frame. Then using systematic random sampling ($k = N/n$, where, k = interval, N = study population, n = sample size), 189 households was selected for the sample survey based on proportional to sample size calculation.

3.4. Method of Data Collection and Instruments

3.4.1. Sample Survey

The study used semi structured questionnaire of the Conflict Resolution Questionnaire (CQR). The CQR is adopted and modified in order to assure the research objectives.

3.4.2. In-depth Interviews

Study used in-depth interviews to collect rich and detailed data from respondents who have back ground information about indigenous knowledge as social capital in managing conflicts. The interview was done with selected individuals like local elders, religious leaders, and influential women who have mediated and settled conflicts through indigenous method.

3.5. Data Analysis Method

Quantitative Data Analysis: The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistical calculations such as mean, frequency, and percentage in order to describe and summarize demographic, and socio-economic characteristics of the data and results was displayed in tables, charts and figures.

Qualitative Data Analysis: For the qualitative data, the study used thematic data analysis techniques that involves identifying or categorizing, analyzing and reporting patterns or themes within the collected data in narration form. The researcher was organize the qualitative data's to generate categories, themes, &

patterns, and organizes similar ideas together in order to come with rich and detailed information that complement the quantitative findings.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Informed consent: study participants were received clear information about purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, voluntary participation, and right to withdraw.

Confidentiality/anonymity: In this study data were anonymized and kept securely to safeguard identities.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.1. Quantitative Data: Socio-demographic Descriptions of Respondents

4.1.1. Sex of Respondents

Table 1. Sex of respondents.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Male	180	95.2%
Female	9	4.8%
Total	189	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Sex of respondents: As indicated in Table 1, of the total 194 respondents, 69 (35.6%) were male and the remaining 125 (64.4%) were female. From the above table, it is possible to

conclude that the majority of the respondents were female. Therefore, in Tehuledere town, the majority of respondents were male.

4.1.2. Age of Respondents

Table 2. Age of respondents.

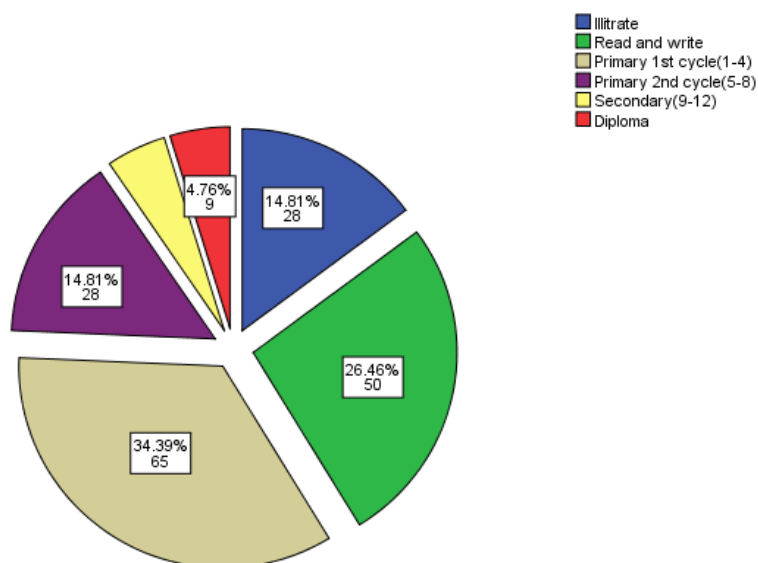
Variables	Mean	Median	Mode	Min	Max	Std.devi	Range
Age of respondents	61.61	61	56	41	74	8.38	33

Source: Field survey, 2025

According to Table 2, while the average mean age of respondents was 61.61, the most common age for the respondents was 56. The age difference between the maximum and the minimum age is 33. A standard difference of 8.38 showed that there is a moderate age variation around the mean value. The average age of respondents (61.61 years) suggests a population that

is predominantly older, which is often associated with wisdom and experience in many indigenous cultures. Elders are typically recognized as key figures in conflict resolution. Their age often commands respect, allowing them to mediate effectively.

4.1.3. Educational Status of Respondents



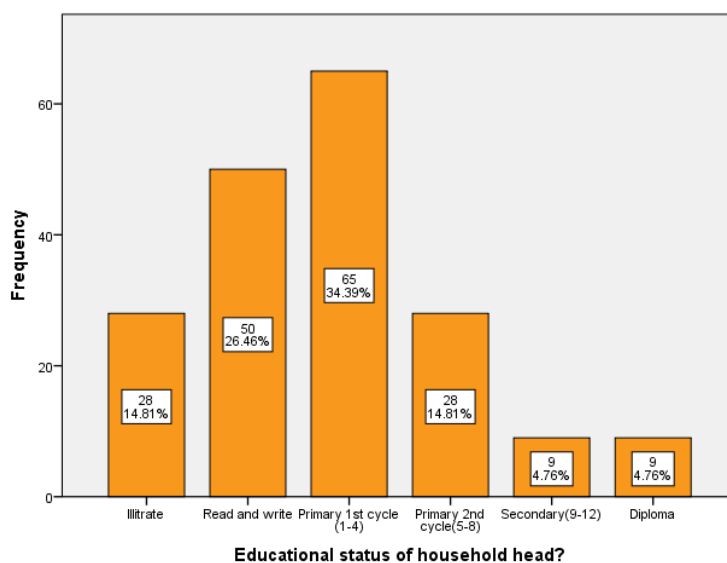
Source: Field survey, 2025

Figure 1. Educational status of respondents.

Educational status of respondents: As shown in Figure 1, 28 (14.81%) were illiterate, 50 (26.5%) were can read and write, 65 (34.4%) were Primary 1st cycle (1-4), 28 (14.8%) attended Primary 2nd cycle (5-8), 9 (4.8%) were achieved secondary school, and the remaining 9 (4.8%) have diploma. Education equips individuals with critical thinking and analytical

skills, which are essential for effective conflict resolution. The predominance of respondents with lower educational achievement may impact the strategies employed in resolving disputes, potentially limiting their effectiveness and sustainability.

4.1.4. Marital Status of Respondents



Source: Field survey, 2025

Figure 2. Marital status of respondents.

Marital status of respondents: Based on Figure 2, 134 (70.9%) were married, 46 (24.3%) were divorced, and only 9 (4.8%) were widowed. A significant majority of the respondents (70.9%) are married, indicating that stable family structures are prevalent in the community. This high percentage of married individuals may influence social dynamics, community cohesion, and collective conflict resolution approaches. Being married often fosters a sense of responsibility and commitment to family unity, which can be instrumental in conflict resolution processes. Married respondents may have a vested

interest in maintaining harmony within their families and communities, potentially making them more inclined to participate in and support reconciliation efforts.

The divorce rate stands at 24.3%, which is considerable. This indicates that conflict within marriages exists, which may also parallel broader community conflicts. Understanding the reasons behind these divorces could provide insight into underlying tensions that may impact community relations and conflict resolution strategies.

4.1.5. Religion of Respondents

Table 3. Religion of respondents.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Orthodox	63	33.3%
Muslim	122	64.6%
Protestant	4	2.1%
Total	189	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025,

Religion respondents: As shown in Table 3, concerning religion Respondents', 63 (33.3%) were Orthodox, and 122 (64.6%) were Muslim, and the remaining 4 (2.2%) were

protestant. Therefore, from the above analysis, it is possible to conclude that the majority of Respondents were muslim.

4.1.6. Household Family Size

Table 4. Household family size.

Variables	Mean	Median	Mode	Min	Max	Std.devi	Range
Age of respondents	5.4	5	5	3	9	1.57	6

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Average family size: Based on Table 4, the average family size of respondents' is 5.4, and 5 is the most common family size for respondents with a range of 6 & a standard deviation of 1.57. The average family size is reported to be 5.4, suggesting that families within this community are relatively large. This figure points to potential social dynamics that could influence conflict resolution processes, as larger families often entail complex interpersonal relationships and stronger family ties. With 5 being the most common family size, this indicates a typical family structure within the community. This commonality may lead to shared experiences and values that can strengthen community ties, fostering a collaborative approach to conflict resolution.

The family size shows a range of 6, with a standard deviation of 1.57. This indicates that while most families cluster around the average size, there is some variability. Understanding this variability can help mediators recognize that larger families might have different perspectives and needs in conflict situations compared to smaller ones.

4.1.7. Place of Birth

As one can look from Table 5, the majority of respondents 160 (84.7%) were born in Tehuledere wereda; the remaining 29 (15.3%) were born in Haik town. The above analysis implies that a significant majority of respondents (84.7%) were

born in Tehuledere Wereda indicates strong community ties and local identity. This familiarity with local customs and norms often plays a crucial role in conflict resolution, suggesting a richer cultural heritage and shared values, which can facilitate understanding in conflict situations. When community members have a shared background, they may be more receptive to traditional conflict resolution mechanisms that emphasize restoration and reconciliation.

Table 5. Place of birth.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Tehuledere wereda	160	84.7%
Haik city	29	15.3%
Total	189	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

4.1.8. How Long Have You Lived in Tehuledere Wereda

Table 6. How long have you lived in Tehuledere wereda.

Variables	Mean	Median	Mode	Min	Max	Std.devi	Range
Age of respondents	52.56	52	60	34	67	10.25	33

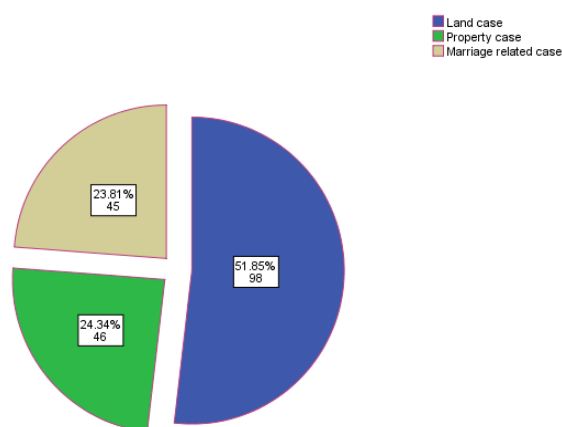
Source: Field Survey, 2025

As shown in Table 6, the average mean age of respondents was 52.56, the most common age for the respondents was 60. The age difference between the maximum and the minimum age is 33. A standard difference of 10.25 showed that there is a moderate age variation around the mean value. The median age of 52 implies that half the respondents are older than this age, which may suggest a reliance on the wisdom and experiences of older generations. In many indigenous cultures, elders play a crucial role in conflict resolution, serving as mediators and sources of traditional knowledge. Their perspectives

can significantly influence the community's approach to resolving disputes. The range of 33 years indicates a diverse age group within the respondents. While the majority might lean towards the older demographic, the presence of younger individuals. The age distribution can influence how conflicts are perceived and addressed within the community. Older individuals may prioritize traditional methods that emphasize negotiation and reconciliation, while younger members might advocate for integrating more contemporary approaches.

4.2. Quantitative Data: Objective Based Likert Scale Questions

4.2.1. The Common Causes of Conflict in Your Area



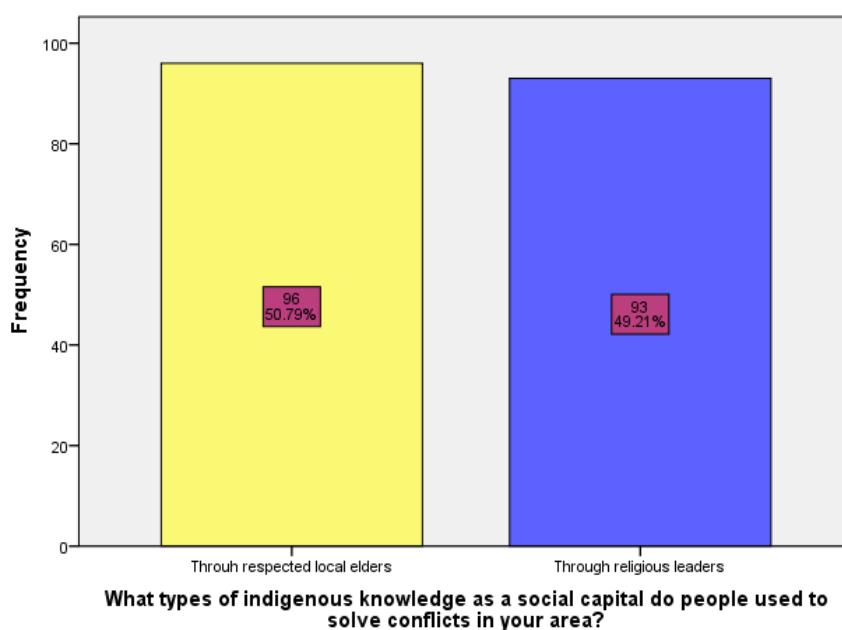
Source: Field Survey, 2025

Figure 3. Common causes of conflict.

Common causes of conflict: As shown [Figure 3](#), The first causes of conflict is related with land case 98 (51.9%), the second cause is property related case 46 (24.3%), and the remaining 45 (23.8%) responded to marriage related cases. The above analysis indicates that disputes over land are the leading cause of conflict, representing 51.9% of cases. This implies that challenges related to land ownership, usage rights, and access are deeply embedded in the community, likely reflecting wider socioeconomic pressures and traditional inheritance

practices. Next, property-related conflicts account for 24.3%, revealing notable tensions surrounding material possessions and resources. Marriage-related disputes make up 23.8% of cases, underscoring the importance of interpersonal relationships and family dynamics in conflict situations. Therefore, the finding implies the need for a holistic approach to conflict resolution that considers both material and relational aspects.

4.2.2. Types of Indigenous Knowledge as Social Capital Do People Used to Solve Conflicts in Your Area



Source: Field Survey, 2025

Figure 4. Types of indigenous knowledge to solve conflict.

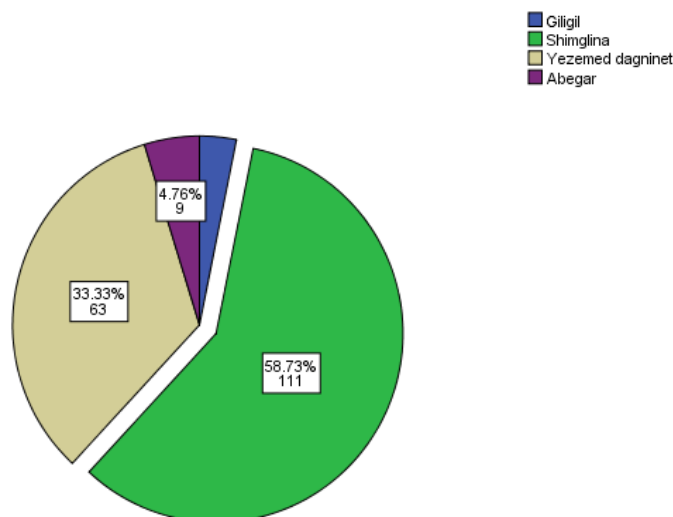
Types of indigenous knowledge to solve conflict: As shown in [Figure 4](#), More than half of the respondents 96 (50.8%) responded that the most common types of indigenous knowledge to solve conflict is through respected local elders; the remaining 93 (49.2%) responded to solve conflict through religious leaders. The above analysis indicated that substantial faith on respected local elders as the primary means of conflict resolution, with over half of the respondents (50.8%) identifying elders as the most common source of indigenous knowledge in addressing conflicts. This implies the elders' esteemed role within the community, serving as mediators who utilize cultural wisdom and established traditions to guide resolution processes. On the other hand, nearly half of the respondents (49.2%) specified that religious leaders also play a crucial role in conflict resolution, suggesting a harmonized system where spiritual authority intersects with traditional leadership.

4.2.3. The Forms of Indigenous Knowledge Do People Used to Manage Their Conflict

Common forms of conflict management: Based on [Figure 5](#), the great majority 111 (58.7%) responded that Shimgilina their preferred dispute resolution mechanism; Yezemed dagninet is the second form of conflict management where 63 (33.3%) responded to it; Moreover, 9 (4.8%) responded for Abegar, and only 6 (3.2%) responded for Giligil. Therefore, from the above analysis implies that more than half of the respondents (58.7%) prefer Shimgilina as the primary conflict resolution mechanism This demonstrates the strong cultural value placed on community assemblies, where collective dialogue and consensus-building are central to resolving conflicts. Next to Shimgilina, Yezemed Dagninet is the second most favored method, with 33.3% of respondents identifying it as an effective form of conflict management, signifying that structured negotiations and mediated discussions also hold importance in

the community. On the other hand, the less prevalent methods, such as Abegar (4.8%) and Giligil (3.2%), indicate a diminishing role of these practices in contemporary conflict resolution. To generalize, the data reflects a robust reliance on com-

munal methods, particularly Shimgilina, emphasizing the enduring significance of indigenous knowledge and local customs in maintaining social cohesion and effectively addressing disputes within the community.



Source: Field Survey, 2025

Figure 5. Which forms of indigenous knowledge do people used to manage their conflict.

4.2.4. I Prefer to Manage Conflict by Using Indigenous Knowledge as Social Capital

Table 7. Preference for indigenous knowledge.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly dis agree	43	22.7%
Disagree	13	6.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	19	10%
Agree	114	60.3%
Strongly agree	-	-
Total	189	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Preference for indigenous knowledge: As Table 7 indicates, 114 (60.3%) have showed strong preference for managing conflict using indigenous knowledge as social capital, highlighting the effectiveness and cultural relevance of indigenous knowledge in conflict resolution. In contrast, only minorities 44 (22.7%) and 13 (6.9%) responded for strongly dis agree and disagree respectively.

The above findings showed a strong dependent on indigenous knowledge as a preferred mechanism for conflict management among respondents (60 implying the perceived effectiveness and cultural significance of indigenous practices in addressing disputes within the community. Inversely, the relatively low rates of disagreement (29.6%) suggest that while some individuals may question or prefer alternative conflict resolution methods, the great majority inclination towards indigenous knowledge reflects its deeply rooted role in social cohesion.

4.2.5. I Gave More Attention for Indigenous Knowledge in Managing Conflict

Table 8. Attention for indigenous knowledge.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly dis agree	39	20.6%
Disagree	27	14.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	28	14.8%
Agree	91	48.1%
Strongly agree	4	2.1
Total	189	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Attention for indigenous knowledge: Based on Table 8, 39 (20.6%) of respondents strongly disagreed, 27 (14.3%) disagreed, and 28 (14.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Conversely, the great majority or almost half of the respondents 91 (48.1%) agreed and 4 (2.1%) strongly agreed.

The above analysis indicates a positive perception of indigenous knowledge as a tool for conflict management, with 48.1% of respondents expressing agreement with its use, emphasizing the recognition of indigenous practices in addressing disputes, although the relatively high levels of disagreement of 34.9% is a sign of substantial division in opinion regarding their effectiveness. The presence of 14.8% neutral respondents indicates that some individuals might be unsure or uncertain about the role of indigenous knowledge in conflict resolution. Furthermore, the very few who strongly agreed (2.1%) point to a lack of overwhelming enthusiasm for this approach. Therefore, the findings reflect a complex landscape of opinions on indigenous knowledge in conflict management, showing both its importance and the need for broader consensus and understanding within the community.

4.2.6. Young People Are Strongly Dependent on Their Indigenous Knowledge in Managing Conflict

Table 9. *Dependent of young people on their indigenous knowledge.*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	47	24.9%
Disagree	114	60.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	19	10.1%
Agree	91	48.1%
Strongly agree	9	4.8%
Total	189	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The data presented in Table 9, 47 (24.9%) responded to strongly disagreed, 114 (60.3%) were agreed, 19 (10.1%) were neither agreed nor disagreed, 91 (48.1%) were agreed and few respondents 9 (4.8%) were strongly agreed. The above analysis showed a complex and predominantly skeptical view toward the use of indigenous knowledge in conflict resolution among the young generation. The great majority of respondents (60.3%) disagreed showing a strong opposition to relying on indigenous

practices for managing conflicts. This is further compounded by 24.9% of respondents who strongly disagreed, illustrating a considerable segment of the young population that may lack confidence in the effectiveness of these traditional methods. In contrast, only 48.1% agreed, with a mere 4.8% expressing strong agreement, highlighting that support for indigenous knowledge in conflict resolution is not robust. The findings reveal a general reluctance to embrace indigenous practices as primary tools for conflict resolution within the young community, pointing to potential challenges in promoting these traditional methods.

4.2.7. I Believed That Indigenous Knowledge Is Not Changing in Managing Conflicts

Table 10. *Changing aspects of indigenous knowledge.*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	48	25.4%
Disagree	113	59.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	10	5.3%
Agree	18	9.5%
Strongly agree	-	-
Total	189	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Changing aspects of indigenous knowledge: Table 10 shows that 48 (25.4%) responded to strongly disagreed, 113 (59.8%) disagreed, 10 (5.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed, and the remaining 18 (9.5%) responded to agreed. The above analysis highlights a fundamental skepticism regarding the notion that indigenous knowledge is static in managing conflicts. A significant majority of respondents (59.8%) disagreed with the idea that this knowledge remains unchanged, and an additional 25.4% strongly disagreed, indicating a strong consensus that acknowledges the dynamic nature of indigenous practices in conflict resolution. In contrast, only 9.5% agreed with the assertion, suggesting that a mere fraction of the population believes in the permanence of traditional methods. The small percentage (5.3%) of neutral responses reflects a lack of certainty among some individuals. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the use of indigenous knowledge is changing, responsive to contemporary challenges and situations in conflict management, which points to a recognition of the need for adaptation and change within traditional practices.

4.2.8. I Prefer to Solve Conflicts by Using Our Indigenous Knowledge Rather Than Formal Institutions

Table 11. Preference of indigenous knowledge.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly dis agree	17	9%
Disagree	74	39.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	19	10.1%
Agree	79	41.8%
Strongly agree	-	-
Total	189	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

As shown in Table 11, 17 (9%) strongly dis agreed showing a significant inclination towards the preference for resolving conflicts through indigenous knowledge rather than formal institutions, 75 (39.1%) dis agreed, 19 (10.1%) remains neutral, and the remaining 79 (41.8%) respondents were agreed. The above analysis discloses a convincing dichotomy in the attitudes toward conflict resolution approaches among respondents. With 48.1% expressing disagreement with the idea of relying on formal institutions, a significant number clearly favor indigenous knowledge as a preferable method. This disagreement may imply a broader skepticism towards formal processes, suggesting that these mechanisms are viewed as inadequate or disconnected from the community's cultural context

and lived experiences.

The presence of a neutral stance among 10.1% of respondents indicates uncertainty or a lack of strong opinion, potentially reflecting a gap in understanding the efficacy or relevance of these methods. Conversely, the 41.8% who agree with formal institutions may represent a younger or differing demographic that values systematic conflict resolution. Ultimately, this divergence calls for a deeper examination of the underlying reasons for these preferences, highlighting the need for empowering indigenous approaches while also considering potential integrations with formal mechanisms to create a more holistic framework for conflict resolution.

4.2.9. Indigenous Knowledge's Are Well Codified and Documented in Our Area/ Wereda

Table 12. Codification & Documentation of indigenous knowledge.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly dis agree	32	16.9%
Disagree	122	64.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	12	6.3%
Agree	23	12.2%
Strongly agree	-	-
Total	189	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 12, indicated that 32 (16.9%) respondents, strongly dis agreed, 122 (64.6%) respondents dis agreed, 12 (6.3%) were uncertain, and the remaining 23 (12.2%) respondents agreed. The analysis reveals a dominant uncertainty regarding

the codification and documentation of indigenous knowledge in the area, with 64.6% of respondents disagreeing with the assertion that indigenous knowledge is well codified. While, only 12.2% agree, with a mere 6.3% remaining neutral. The

significant percentage of strong disagreement (16.9%) further underscores the prevailing sentiment that indigenous knowledge may not be adequately documented. This indicates a potential gap in the preservation and formal recognition of valuable cultural practices and insights within the community.

Therefore, the lack of confidence in the codification of indigenous knowledge suggests that community members may perceive this knowledge as vulnerable to loss or neglect. The overpowering disagreement could reflect concerns about the accessibility and transmission of cultural heritage, indicating that traditional practices and wisdom are not effectively recorded or institutionalized. This situation highlights the necessity for initiatives aimed at preserving and documenting indigenous knowledge, which could strengthen community identity and ensure that these invaluable resources are passed down to future generations.

4.2.10. My Preference to Use Indigenous Knowledge in Managing Conflict Increases from Time to Time

Table 13. Preference to use indigenous knowledge in managing conflict.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly dis agree	22	11.6%

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	143	75.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	13	6.9%
Agree	11	5.8%
Strongly agree	-	-
Total	189	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 13, indicates that 22 (11.6%) of respondents showed strong dis agreement, 143 (75.7%) respondents dis agreed, while 13 (6.9%) were showed uncertainty, and the remaining 11 (5.8%) respondents were agreed. The analysis suggests that 75.7% of respondents showed the notion that their preference decreases over time. Only 11.6% of respondents strongly disagree, while 5.8% agree and 6.9% remain neutral.

This overwhelming majority indicates that individuals feel a growing affinity for indigenous approaches, which may reflect a broader societal recognition of the effectiveness and relevance of these practices in conflict resolution over time. This trend may also indicate a desire for more context-specific solutions in conflict resolution. The findings could advocate for the integration of indigenous knowledge into formal conflict management frameworks, fostering a more holistic approach that resonates with community values and experiences.

4.3. Qualitative Data: In-depth Interview

4.3.1. Demographic Back Ground of Participants

Table 14. Demographic back ground of Participants.

No	Kebele	Pseudo Name	Sex	Age	Roles	Date of interview
1	Ketie (05)	A	M	65	Religious leader	Sep 18, 2025
2	Ketie (05)	B	M	56	Elderly leader	Sep 18, 2025
3	Gobeya (012)	C	M	67	Edir lider	Sep 19, 2025
4	Gobeya (012)	D	M	62	Elderly leader	Sep 19, 2025
5	Weldelulo (04)	E	M	51	Religious leader	Sep 25, 2025
6	Weldelulo (04)	F	F	60	Influential women	Sep 25, 2025
7	Weldelulo (04)	G	F	67	Influential women	Sep 26, 2025

The above demographic data tells significant insights on the role of local leaders in handling conflicts. A total of seven respondents were participated for the in-depth interviews, of the

total, 5 (71.4%) were males and the remaining 2 (29.6%) were females.

4.3.2. Common Causes of Conflict

In response to the above question majority of the respondents agreed that the common causes of conflict in Tehuledere wereda were related to land, properties and family cases such as marriage selection cases.

Land stands out as this really important thing there. It is not just for making money, but also for how people see each other's status. From what the respondents said, pretty much everyone agrees these disputes are at the center of it all. That part gets a bit messy when you think about how it ties into daily life.

Property theft is another issue that comes up a lot. It is more than losing things, it makes the whole area feel unsafe. Maybe the law is not handling it well enough, or people are not sticking together like they should. I am not totally sure, but it seems to feed into bigger tensions.

Family related conflicts, especially around marriage choices, can turn personal arguments into something that affects everyone. It is interesting how that escalates so quickly. Some might say it is just private stuff, but others see it spilling over. The data points to this as a key area anyway.

4.3.3. Types of Indigenous Knowledge Used as Conflict Prevention Mechanisms Practiced to Settle the Conflicts

In answering this question the great majority of interviewee responded that they solve conflicts using the wisdom of elderly people, local leaders and religious leaders. People interview keep coming back to how they turn to elders and local leaders, plus religious figures, when it comes to sorting out conflicts. It feels like this kind of traditional knowledge is really what holds things together for community stuff and fixing problems.

Relying on these respected people helps keep the social setup strong and gets everyone feeling like they have a part in it. Sort of a shared duty thing. The way they stress wisdom, it seems to point to this deep rooted idea in the culture that elders and leaders have something special that makes talking things out and mediating easier. Not sure if thats everything, but it stands out.

4.3.4. Roles of Indigenous Knowledge as Social Capital in Managing Conflict

Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are deep rooted in the local culture, norms and collective responsibility as described by participants. These mechanisms were commonly referred to as ways of restoring peace rather than enforcing punishment and in doing so they have economic social and cultural roles. The in-depth interview implied that 'indigenous knowledge is not only seen as a conflict resolution tool but also represents a way of maintaining one's cultural identity, encouraging social relationships and in addition, improving one's economic situation'.

Impact of Cultural continuity: Indigenous conflict resolution is described as allowing for the maintenance of culture, and therefore plurality of identities and sense of community.

Economic Gains: As resolution is arrived at efficiently and amicably, the community will save the expense of formal legal procedures and so can have a more vibrant community economy.

Trust Building is essential for repairing social relationships among members of the community in the resolution of conflicts through culturally resonant means.

4.3.5. Changing Aspects of Indigenous Knowledge as Social Capital in Managing Conflict

In respond to the above question the majority of interviewee replied that there is notable changes in our indigenous knowledge usage particularly the younger generation are becoming less dependent on their indigenous knowledge, they mainly prefer to settle conflict through the formal legal systems. They also added that some of our indigenous knowledge are being endanger of lost as they are not properly codified.

Respondents also expressed concern about the downward trend of the younger generation's respect and dependence on local traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. In essence, it is a transition toward formal institutions at the cost of traditional mechanisms.

If we do not respect our elders, respecting our indigenous knowledge, the community ties will eventually break down and we will depend on formal institutions which may or may not be effective for resolving conflict.

4.3.6. Effectiveness of Indigenous Knowledge as with Formal Organizations in Managing Conflict

The majority of the interviewee agreed that if our indigenous knowledge are properly codified, documented and passed from generation to generation they will be much more effective than the formal system in enhancing inclusiveness, holistic understanding, collective healing, empathy and mutual respect, and strengthening community tie and social cohesions.

The interviewees mostly agree that indigenous knowledge could be more effective than formal institutions if appropriately documented and transmitted through generations. This presents a critical tension between traditional and formal systems of justice.

The informants were generally in consensus that indigenous knowledge might outperform formal institutions if securely recorded and handed down, thus raising a final call for clarification in this crucial dilemma between customary and formal justice.

Inclusiveness and Holism: Aboriginal methods are considered inclusive, emphasizing relations rather than adversarial conflicts seen in formal judicial courts.

Solutions for the community: Priority given to returning the

peace and not declaring winners and losers preserves community values of caring and respect, and builds social capital.

Appeal of documenting: The call for documentation indicates a need for some contemporary preservation of these traditions to be able to keep them alive and revered.

4.4. Discussions

4.4.1. Indigenous Conflict Resolution and Elders' Role

Dependence on the elders to resolve conflict was very high, with 50.2% of the participants depending on the traditional method to resolve a conflict. This high dependence on the elders to resolve conflicts highlighted not only the dependence but also the importance of the elders playing the critical role of being the focus of authority in the society. This also highlighted the significance of traditional authority, which has also been pointed out by other studies [2, 11].

Elderly people in society gain respect not only because of their age factor but because of the accumulated wisdom that they possess in relation to their collective experiences. They play an important stake in conflict resolution because the conflict that is resolved by their efforts is reflective of the values and mores of society in general that focus on corrections in relation to restorative justices concepts.

4.4.2. Gender Dynamics in Conflict Resolution

The data shows there is a marked gender disparity among the sampled populations with only 4.8% of the group consisting of females. There arises a critical question of gender inequality in the representation of people for conflict resolution processes. The study confirms findings produced by research carried out by both Melaku, A. and Zewde, B., which show that the participation of women remains sidelined despite their vital roles in the lives of Ethiopians [19, 27].

The dominant representation by older men as mediators may retain patriarchal systems. This may marginalize the input from women regarding their approaches to conflict resolution. Discrimination from decision-making may carry significant undertones, especially regarding the success of the resolution processes. The need to acknowledge the importance of taking note of gender dynamics is essential, especially when involving women's input regarding approaches to conflict resolution. This may add value to the approach by ensuring that there is a complete appreciation of the different variables within the conflicts, especially those that involve family dynamics.

4.4.3. Causes of Conflict and Management Strategies

Land disputes emerge as a major cause of conflict, with 51.9% of the respondents considering this aspect, followed by conflicts related to property (24.3%), while those associated

with marriages come third with 23.8%. These observations appear to be well in tune with previous studies of Aalen, L. and Durie, M., which give considerably more emphasis to the fact that land scarcity and property rights continue to be absolutely fundamental to the sources of tension in Ethiopia [1, 18].

In order to effectively manage conflicts, it is important to understand the drivers of the conflict. It can be concluded that the study results have established the need to manage conflicts holistically, with a view to addressing both material and relational dimensions of the conflict. In order to manage conflicts within the indigenous settings, it would be important to take into consideration the socio-economic vulnerabilities. As postulated by Alemayehu, M., the use of traditional methods, like the Shimgilina method, perpetuates the notion that cohesion within society and involvement of society within the conflict resolution process is essential [7].

4.4.4. Indigenous Knowledge and Its Dynamics

On analyzing the results, it appears that the view on indigenous knowledge is complex because 75.7% of respondents felt that the preference for these approaches is declining over the years. It seems to portray that with changing times and with the rising need to address modern-day problems, the usefulness of indigenous approaches might be declining in the views of people. Other authors, Adal, Y. and Tadesse, A., in their earlier research work done on the topic, concluded that with the passage of time and the powerful effect of modernization and globalization on people, the next generations are increasingly showing less concern and faith in indigenous approaches [3, 23].

The dynamic nature of indigenous knowledge indicates that it is not fixed but instead constantly evolving to respond to various developments in society. This acknowledgment of dynamism in indigenous knowledge demonstrates how traditional knowledge systems can be incorporated into formal systems of conflict resolution. Scholars indicate that merging indigenous systems of conflict resolution with modern systems is highly effective in managing conflict. This is because it not only preserves indigenous knowledge systems but is also capable of building resilience to the dynamic nature of society.

The interaction between traditional knowledge and modern developments in the field of conflict resolution in Tehuledere woreda is a testament to the strength of traditional practices as well as the need to evolve. Recognizing the importance of elders in the community, the nuances of gender, and the changing views about traditional knowledge would be helpful in dealing with the issues. The importance of traditional practices in handling conflicts within communities, along with modern methods, is brought out in the findings.

Finally, the situation requires an ongoing dialogue process that considers traditional knowledge but at the same time is attentive to the new socio-cultural realities unfolding. The struggles that surround the enhancement of the representation of gender, the relevance of indigenous practices, and documentation of knowledge are some of the areas which need a

collaborative approach by the community, research, and policy sectors. Conflict resolution with varied attitudes toward the issue can be effective and culturally sensitive to promote social cohesion informed by the changing context.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

The role of the elderly in the resolution of conflicts is apparent throughout the study, reflecting the cultural importance that is placed upon the wisdom and power that the elderly have within society. The requirement for the elderly to be consulted for the resolution of a conflict establishes the essential importance of the elderly within society because they have a critical function within their societies; they ensure that the conflict is well resolved. The elderly have cultural knowledge that enables them to have the experience necessary for the resolution of a conflict that has been prepared. The study is in agreement with previous studies that recognized the critical effect that the engagement of the elderly in Ethiopian society has upon a punitive approach.

The alarming gender gap, as identified in the study, points to the relevant questions of representation and inclusivity of women in the conflict resolution process. With women respondents at only 4.8%, it is clear that their voices are significantly marginalized, thus limiting the resolution strategies that do not embrace gender diversity. The literature also corroborates such apprehension by suggesting that in traditional settings, the role and contribution of women in conflict resolution often remain hidden. Ensuring gender inclusiveness is, therefore, important and may contribute toward enriching mediation processes for more holistic conflict resolution strategies that factor in the needs of the entire community.

One of the critical takeaways from the analysis is the direct link between socio-economic issues and the primary causes of conflict identified, particularly land disputes. This persistence of the conflicts indicates that what is needed are wider socio-economic reforms which address ownership rights and reasonable access to land. It has been reiterated in previous research that any meaningful conflict resolution must also cover economic vulnerabilities besides the traditional mediation practices. The findings of the study reiterate the urgent need for integrated strategies that consider both socio-economic factors and indigenous practices.

The results indicate a rather complicated scenario regarding the perception of indigenous knowledge, which states that a substantial number of respondents acknowledge that their feelings about favoring tradition have lessened over the years. This is supportive of the idea that, as a result of modernization and globalization, the next generation is likely adopting new approaches rather than adhering to traditional approaches. This has been supported by research, which states that there has been growing distrust among the young generation regarding indigenous approaches due to external influences.

The absence of confidence in the documentation and codification of the indigenous knowledge creates a major risk to the preservation of the cultural practices specific to the community. The participants are strongly opposed to the idea that the indigenous knowledge has been properly codified; thus, the issue creates a major void in acknowledging and embedding the cultural practices into the community. The improper documentation of the cultural practices may result in the loss and erosion of precious intellectual inputs that are required to resolve conflicts.

5.2. Recommendation

Promote Gender Inclusivity in Conflict Resolution: Future activities should, therefore, be more proactive to ensure that women play a significant role in conflict resolution processes. Programs and forums aimed at empowering women into community mediation should be put in place, strengthening the range and manner of peace-building strategies. Education and training in conflict management should be packaged in a way that encourages women's participation to ensure their input becomes reflected and valued in community debate.

Document and Codify Indigenous Knowledge: Steps need to be taken to document and formalize the indigenous knowledge available to the community concerning conflict resolution. Such might include joint workshops undertaken by the elders and the youths to compile resource material incorporating the traditional approaches and insights of the former. It could be used as training material for the next generation to pass across important aspects of their cultural heritage and instill respect for traditional approaches to conflict resolution in the youth of the community.

Integrate Modern and Traditional Conflict Resolution Methods: It is important to incorporate a modern dispute resolution tool with indigenous techniques in a complementary manner in order to provide a fitting response to the modern-day realities and challenges. The training program for mediators should incorporate both of these models in a way that enables them to decide on a fitting technique for a situation while handling a dispute. It not only honors the contribution of indigenous techniques, it also makes them more relevant to today's situation.

Fostering Dialogue Among Generations: Encouraging the exchange of ideas between the elderly and the youth with regard to the relevance of the indigenous practices would assist in bridging the gap that exists between the elderly and the youth. Providing forums where the youth are able to understand the relevance of the practices as well as air their own knowledge and understanding would be very important.

Address Socio-Economic Factors in Conflict Resolution: In any future conflict resolution, apart from concentrating on conventional methods, it is essential to address socio-economic issues driving conflicts. Interaction with the concerned government and NGOs for implementing programs beneficial for bettering rights over land and economic support can help mitigate some of the conflict witnessed in cases of disputed

land. Involvement with stakeholders for implementing programs for education, livelihood, and reform of land policies would provide a better platform for conflict resolution.

Abbreviations

IK	Indigenous Knowledge
CQR	Conflict Resolution Questionnaire
NURC	National Urban Reform Committee
CSA	Central Statistical Agency
IMC	Indigenous Conflict Management
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Acknowledgments

The authors thank Wollo university for financial and technical issues. This article was only possible to complete with the genuine support and guidance provided by Wollo University. I impressively benefited from the cooperation and participation of many individuals in Tehuledere Woreda. I am grateful for their invaluable contributions to the accomplishment of this study.

Author Contributions

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Funding

This research work was funded by Wollo University. Wollo University managed all the necessary costs associated with this research work.

Data Availability Statement

Author declares to attach data upon request.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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